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Progress Toward the Permanent International Court of Arbitration.

The project for a permanent international court of arbitration moves slowly, but it moves. That is the chief thing. Since the ratification of the Hague Convention by the Senate of the United States on the 5th of February, President McKinley has affixed his signature to the document, and sent it on to Minister Newel to be deposited at The Hague. That completes the formal ratification by our country. It remains for our government to name persons, not more than four, to serve as members of the court. This will probably not be done until all or most of the signatory powers have deposited their ratifications at the Netherlands capital.

The Dutch government evidently has information which leads it to believe that the ratifications of the other Powers will be forwarded soon. It is probable that some of them have already acted, though we have seen no notice of the fact in the press dispatches. The Dutch government itself has already completed its ratification, the Second Chamber of the States-General having adopted the Hague Convention on the 3d of April by a vote of sixty-five to twenty. In addition to this, the government authorities at The Hague have leased a large and suitable building in the Prinsengracht, which they are fitting up and will have in readiness for the installation of the bureau of the court, as soon as the ratifications are all in and the members of the Court named.

The movement has now gone so far that its consummation is assured. The action of the United States government has made certain the favorable action of the others, if there was ever any doubt about the course which they would take. There may be some further delay because of political complications, though we do not expect much.

The setting up of this great tribunal, which is to form the broad gateway to the peace of the world, is

the political expression of the living, abiding forces which are steadily triumphing over the darkness and discord of humanity. In spite of the wars and rumors of war of which the earth is just now so full, the motives and elements out of which they spring are decadent, and, busy as the devil is, he can never restore them to their former vitality and strength. The permanent tribunal, once going, will hasten their decay, more rapidly perhaps than any political institutions ever yet set up.

Righteousness and War.

It is a very common saying that there are worse things than war. One hears the statement most frequently when some war is on, which it is felt must be justified. Sometimes, though not often, a little amplification is attempted. Wickedness is worse than war. Dishonor is worse than war. Oppression is worse than war. Absorption in material things is worse than war. A stagnant peace is worse than war. But usually no explanation is attempted, no effort at analysis of the proposition made. The statement is put forth as a glittering generality with all the confidence of intuitive truth. When a man has delivered himself of this word, "There are worse things than war," he exults because he feels that all opposition is crushed, all possible counter-arguments down, and that the poor friend of peace is cornered and must either grant the proposition or put himself in the unpleasant attitude of seeming to uphold the "worse thing."

Now, of all the arguments ever used in support of war this is probably the weakest. It begins by tacitly admitting that war is a great evil, very low down in the scale of badness, a really unrighteous thing, next to the category of the worst iniquities. War, a bad thing, is compared with these "worse things," is declared to be not so bad as they, and hence the conclusion is drawn, by what process of reasoning it is impossible to say, that it is a good and justifiable thing.

This has always seemed to us a strange way of demonstrating that a thing is right. By this process nearly any kind of wickedness can be turned into righteousness, as by an analogous process any sort of

good may be proved to be bad. For example: There are worse things than wife-beating, or theft, or lying, or arson. Murder is worse than these. Therefore wife-beating, theft, lying and the malicious burning of people's houses are under certain contingencies good and justifiable proceedings. Or turn it the other way, as the Jewish casuists some of them did. There are higher and better things than the care of aged parents. The service of God is such a thing. Therefore, under given circumstances, in order to serve God, one may neglect his helpless parents and turn them out to die.

One has only to throw the light of a little thought on this method of justifying war to show the utter puerility of it. It would be unworthy of serious attention, were it not for the number of intelligent people who resort to it, and the still larger number who are blinded and confused by it. If war is ever a good and righteous thing, which more and more people are doubting, it needs no such comparison with evil and wicked things to uphold it. If it be in itself a monstrous iniquity, or aggregation of iniquities, as so many of the greatest and best men have maintained, its inherent unrighteousness can never be relieved by comparison with lesser evils and systems of wickedness. The use of such an argument in its support is sufficient proof that its defenders are reduced to the last extremity, that they are extremely doubtful of their position, and are ready to resort to any trick of debate to save themselves from defeat and a manly surrender.

Keeping in mind the proposition, "There are worse things than war," heard so often in these days, if one commences to analyze war and study it in its details, he soon finds himself puzzled to know what the dictum can mean, especially in the mouths of good men. For he finds here in this system of wholesale hatred, wholesale murder, wholesale lying, wholesale robbery, wholesale demoralization, wholesale destruction of property, wholesale wrecking of families, etc., every kind of unrighteousness, in greater or less degree, against which both the Decalogue and the Sermon on the Mount are directed. But this detailed analysis is precisely what the praters of the phrase, "worse things than war," never make, at least openly. They talk about motives, and self-sacrifice, and heroism, and honor, and "paramountcy," and "the obligations of sovereignty," and the like, but they refuse or do not dare to look steadily into the "hell of war," to report in its naked deformity what they see, and then to judge accordingly. The charges that have been brought against war, namely, that it is "the sum of all iniquities," "the business of hell," etc., have never been answered from this point of view, and never can be, so long as any moral distinctions remain. Darkness cannot be transformed into light by a process of reasoning.

We cannot have peace without righteousness, it is

often said. Nothing is truer. But can righteousness be established by using unrighteousness as an instrument? War, instead of being the cure of specific forms of unrighteousness, is only their last and worst expression. Often they are worse after war than before. This is always true in low states of public conscience. Sometimes they exhaust themselves in war, just as a disease runs its course and kills itself. But this is because the growing righteousness of society will not longer tolerate the iniquity, and because the evils and horrors of war have revealed to men in a larger way the folly and inhumanity of the evil courses they have been pursuing and are thus led to abandon. But for this fact war, from its own tendencies, would always leave peoples in a worse condition morally than it found them. In some directions it always does. So called righteous wars never spring out of the righteous motives which seemingly operate in producing them. They spring from the selfish and iniquitous motives acting along with the good purposes and throwing themselves under these for cover.

By all means, vigorous and incessant efforts should be made to root out the bad ideas and systems of unrighteousness which lead to war. This all the intelligent friends of peace are constantly doing; none more faithfully. But, while this is done, very little headway can be made toward peace so long as war itself, the supreme multifold expression of the wickedness into which all its heartless and angry force is poured, is separated from its causes and left standing as a holy angel of judgment. So long as this is done, war will continue to exercise its blinding and deadening influence, as it has always done in the past, over men's moral judgments throughout the entire range of life.

When war and righteousness are treated as totally incompatible terms, as will some day be the case, the phrase, "worse things than war," will never again be heard, except as a quotation out of a blind and wilful past. It is high time already that it had disappeared from Christian and civilized lips.

The Anti-Peace Riots in England.

Among the violent demonstrations against those in England who have been trying to induce the British government to stop the war in South Africa, that at Scarborough on the 12th of March seems to have been the most disgraceful and un-English. The home of Mr. Joshua Rowntree, a distinguished citizen, was burned to the ground, and some of the inmates brought into peril of their lives. Mr. William Smith was violently assaulted and the windows of his house smashed in. These persons are members of the Society of Friends, and were exercising in an orderly and peaceful way the rights of free speech, which they had supposed to be the common birthright of all modern Englishmen.